



# Hilton Veterinary Hospital

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## After Hours Emergencies:

Please phone  
(033) 343 4602

## Contact Details:

If your contact details have changed then please inform us .

## This month's theme:

Preventative  
Health Care

It is hard to believe we are into our 5<sup>th</sup> newsletter. I hope you are finding them useful and informative. Thank you for all the support in what we are trying to do. You will remember that Lana and her family moved to George at the start of the year. Unfortunately, the move did not work for her family and they are back in Hilton. In a welcome move, Lana has rejoined the practice.

As you all know by now we have focused on equipping the hospital for all kinds of emergencies from trauma to snake bite, from gall bladder disease to anaemia, from heart failure to cancer treatment, from the treatment of spinal pain to operations to relieve gastric torsions. We have also focused on making routine operations comfortable and safe.

One area people have asked for more assistance with, is basic health care. What comprises basic health care? The first and foremost is the maintenance of health in the face of life threatening diseases. This is achieved through appropriate nutrition, external and internal parasite control and vaccination. Our vaccines company, MDS, has offered to assist financially with the treatment of any case of vaccine failure whilst on their vaccines. To date we have not seen any such cases. It does however give us piece of mind when treating your animals .

Another overlooked gift that we can give our pets is the best chance to find their way home. If they are lost they cannot talk but a microchip can talk for them. It can give us and other veterinarians

your telephone number so that we can phone you to tell you they have been brought in to us. What about bedding? A good bed allows our pets a deserved good night's rest. (I know half of them are on your bed anyway so if that is the case that is fine.) If not why not take the hospital's lead for all our patients and put them all on a sealed foam mattress.

Another common health problem is halitosis or smelly breath which comes from bacterial build up on the teeth. My philosophy on dentals is simple; first learn through our nurse's clinic to apply good dental prophylaxis then have the teeth scaled and polished to remove bacterial harbouring tartar. Using our infra-red torch, the nurses can show you where bacteria are re-colonizing and therefore where to concentrate your efforts.

Obesity creeps up on our pets, especially our Labradors and our cats. Weight loss diets have a large amount of science applied to them to reduce the risk of metabolic disease that occurs during weight loss. Again our nurses will happily assist with a program for your pet.

We know that you cannot always remember to do things and that time flies past so rapidly, that is why we are implementing reminder systems to aid you in maintaining your pet's health with timeous treatments and preventative care management. That is what they say, prevention is better than cure and that is what we want for your pets.

Kind regards Martin de Scally.

Dedicated to the health of your pets.

## The Nurse's Clinic: Relieving that Itch

Sr Debbie Kleu and Sr Nicky Rose Innes

Anyone familiar with that loud thump thump thump as your dog energetically attacks another itchy spot? Or how about that lovely schlurping as they continue to lick the same spot over and over again.....fun to listen to? Well we can guarantee you that despite the tail wagging afterwards, your poor pet is suffering far more than your ears. You see, some animals unfortunately have a genetic predisposition to reacting to environmental allergens. These reactions can show in a few different ways, from sore ears or itchy paws to the entire skin being reddened and itchy.

These allergens we speak about can be a variety of things, from fleas to certain foodstuffs or even grass. (yes, some dogs have been known to be allergic to grass!)

One thing to always make sure of is that you have control over the flea population in your household. Even if they aren't the main allergen, they could aggravate the problem. Regular treatment for your pets against these parasites is a must, along with occasional treatment of the environment. As the larvae drop off our pets and lie in wait snug in their bedding, its best to attack them right there before they can do any harm to our loved ones. So, now you understand a little more about why your pets are keeping you awake at night scratching and licking with great enthusiasm.

But we're sure you're more interested in the "so what now", right? Well, depending on the severity of the symptoms your pet is showing, we may start by suggesting a consult with one of our veterinarians, thereby enabling us to find out the cause of the problem, thereafter choosing the best suited treatment plan.

There are many tools available to you as pet owners to help manage chronic skin conditions. Externally, we've already mentioned flea control, and one can also look at shampoos. It is important to remember never to use human shampoos on your pets. One should also not bath ones animals too often as this will strip their coat of its natural oils. Medicated shampoos should only be used as advised by a veterinarian. For the non itchy skins out there, there are also regular shampoos available that can be used to keep them smelling good and clean and fresh tra la alaaaaa..... Diet can also be the reason for itchy-scratchy skins. It's possible your pet may be allergic to an ingredient used in the food. This is more difficult to diagnose, but thanks to our super-duper food companies with all their research, we have a selection of diets available that are designed specifically to aid in the treatment of inflamed skin conditions. So as we said, there are various reasons for that itch, but thankfully also various ways of combating it.

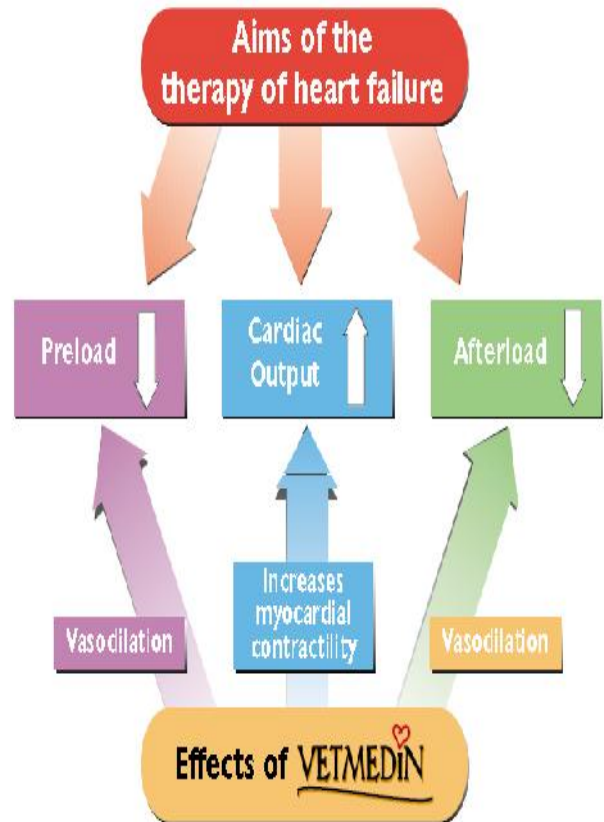
We also have oral supplementations, such as omega 3's & 6's, which work on the skin from the inside. So there is no need for your pet to be itching and scratching any longer. In the past there was always a bit of a reprieve during the winter months however, this is not so with our changing climate and indoor heating .



## Heart Disease

By Dr Martin de Scally

The clinical distinction between heart disease and heart failure lies in the onset of symptoms of heart failure. The detection of a murmur during clinical exam does not mean an animal has heart failure and that treatment is necessarily even indicated. The symptoms of heart failure include a reduced ability to exercise, increased resting respiratory rate, difficulty breathing, weight loss and anorexia, collapsing episodes and coughing. The normal resting respiratory rate in the dog and cat is 20 breaths per minute. Treatment is indicated once this approaches 25 breaths per minute. The modern medical treatment of heart failure is increasingly successful in prolonging the animal's length of quality life. Many other diseases can have overlapping symptoms with heart disease and therefore a diagnosis is very important if treatment is to be optimal and not actually harmful. The correct treatment can alleviate symptoms for around 2 years on average and for up to 5 years depending on the stage of heart failure at diagnosis.



### Looking for Blood Donors

We often need blood donors. Yes there are specific blood group types in dogs. If you are willing to go on an available blood donors list, "Fido" needs to be greater than 30kg and lead a healthy lifestyle. An appropriate rewards programme is offered for those who participate. Please contact Trish. trish@hiltonvethospital.co.za



### Me Too Mattresses

Me Too mattresses are used throughout Hilton Vet Hospital in the animal's domicile. So they have been tried and tested for over a year and a half, with fantastic results. They are foam mattresses sealed in vinyl plastic and come with summer and winter material covers. We carry standard stock but they can be ordered to your specification. Please speak to Jackson or Jane for your requirements.

## A Tribute to Penny

By Diane O' Neill

This is a tribute to an amazing little character. Penny was born on the 31st of May 2000 and arrived in our household at the age of five months. She remained a puppy until three days before her life ended on the 4th of February 2012. This little bulldog loved her toys and was a very happy soul. She had so much love from us and gave us so much back by the bucket full.

Penny was incredibly tenacious especially with her aversion to pop-up sprinkler systems. She 'killed' many a pop-up and got drenched in the process. The 'rainman' installer was called out to repair our system on a regular basis each year not to mention the pool net repair team. Penny loved dropping her kongs and balls into the pool and would wait patiently for me to retrieve them with the leaf scoop. This was a game we had for many years.

If I took too long to notice her lying next to the pool she would chew the net, even with the mixture of citronella oil and surgical spirits painted on to deter her from doing this, as per recommendations by the pool net company. When my new couch arrived, I was making tea. Penny rolled her kong underneath and when I returned to the lounge, there she was on her back ripping the bullnose off trying to retrieve her kong. You won't believe how quickly a couch can be ripped by very strong plier like jaws. She got a scolding but to no avail, the same happened in the guest bedroom to the new base to the bed and the lesson for me was to make sure the kongs were always big so that they couldn't roll under the furniture!

Penny had to endure many illnesses in her latter years from an eye ulcer to cushings, severe arthritis, cardiomyopathy, a splenectomy, and finally stage D heart failure. We decided to put her to sleep to minimise her suffering at the end. She endured pain and discomfort with such grace and we will never forget her. She has left a huge gap in our lives. Sweet dreams our beautiful Penny.

Penny had been my constant companion for almost 12 years even lying next to the bath while I was in it. My husband and I are heartbroken with her loss and so is Beetle (our other precious Bulldog). This has been part of my healing process to put this down on an email to you, so please indulge a very sad client. We had extra special time with Penny thanks to the veterinary expertise of your veterinary hospital including your after hours hospital staff and are so grateful for this.

Our heartfelt thanks to Martin and the rest of the dedicated team at Hilton Veterinary Hospital, including the vets, nurses, reception staff and kennel men. You gave Penny the most compassionate and professional care.



## Is your Dog's Nickname One Stone?

Cryptorchidism in the dog By Dr Daniela Steckler (breeding specialist)

In the unborn foetus, the testes lie near the kidneys in the abdominal cavity. Normal testicular descent in the dog progresses as movement of the testes from the abdominal cavity into the inguinal canal, out of the inguinal canal, and into the scrotum. The descent may fail at any of the described stages. A ligamentous cord attaches to the end of the testis and then runs through the inguinal canal and attaches at the end to the scrotum. The ligament enlarges under stimulation of certain hormones to anchor the testes in place during testicular descent. The ligament grows both in length and width, which causes expansion of the inguinal canal and pulls the testis toward the scrotum as it grows. Once the testis has moved through the inguinal canal, the ligament begins to shrink, thereby pulling the testes into their final scrotal position. The testes pass through the inguinal canal three to four days after birth and reach their final position by 14 - 35 days of age where after they start slowly enlarging in size. If the testis begins to enlarge prior to its entry into the inguinal canal or if its descent is slowed, it may be retained in the abdomen. If it begins to enlarge after entering the inguinal canal but before leaving it, the animal may become an inguinal cryptorchid. The right testis is retained more commonly than the left due to its more forward starting position in the abdomen. Either one or both testes may be retained in the abdomen or the inguinal canal. Neither lack nor excess of hormones are likely to contribute to cryptorchidism. This is proven by the fact that cryptorchid animals do not have very different levels of these hormones compared to normal males, and that treatment with stimulating medications does not successfully resolve the condition. Cryptorchidism is considered to be hereditary. It is an autosomal recessive trait, meaning that it is carried by both dam and sire lines. A number of breeds at risk for cryptorchidism include the Boxer, English Bulldog, Cairn terrier, Chihuahua, Miniature Dachshund, Maltese, Pekingese, Pomeranian, Toy, Miniature and Standard Poodle, Miniature Schnauzer, Old English Sheepdog, Shetland

Sheepdog, Siberian Husky, and Yorkshire Terrier. Cryptorchidism can be associated with other inherited conditions such as inguinal and umbilical hernia, hip dysplasia, patellar luxation, and penile and/or preputial defects.

Retained testes are smaller than scrotal testes, have a reduced sperm production, but do not have affected hormone production, and thus libido is unaffected. Cryptorchid dogs may be interested in bitches on heat but, unless they have one descended testis, they will most likely be infertile. It is important to know that retained testes are 9-14x more predisposed to testicular cancer than normal dogs.

An animal is suspicious of being a cryptorchid if it lacks two testes in the scrotum by 8 weeks of age, and considered a cryptorchid if it does not have two descended testes by the age of 6 months. This might not be a representative expectation as there is a vast difference in age at puberty between breeds. It is more accurate to expect both testes in the scrotum within 2 months of attaining puberty to be considered normal. This means that for large and giant breed dogs, testicular descent may not be complete until well over a year of age. Small and medium breed dogs should be considered cryptorchid if 2 testes are not in the scrotum by 6 - 8 months of age.

Typically, the recommended treatment is castration. If an animal does not have 2 scrotal testes by 2 months after it has reached puberty, the individual should be neutered and not used in any breeding program due to the hereditary nature of the disease and the other associated heritable conditions. There are a number of published and anecdotal protocols involving multiple injections of hormones to stimulate puberty and encourage testicular growth and descent, but there is no strong scientific evidence that any of them is consistently effective. Removal of all affected males, their offspring, and their parents from the breeding program is the recommended course. Waiting until puberty is fully attained is recommended before deeming any individual a cryptorchid.

## Staff Profile

### Dr Derek Clover

Derek joined the practice in February 2012. He has been practising in the Midlands for the last 3 years. Derek qualified in 2006. He practiced in the UK in the West Midlands for 3 years, where he gained valuable experience in small animal medicine and surgery.

Derek has 2 dogs (Bandit and Brynn) and 1 cat (Bell) and numerous quail.

Derek is a passionate general practitioner and enjoys working in a hospital facility where he is able to diagnose and treat animals on both a basic and advanced level.

In his free time Derek enjoys numerous outdoor activities including: canoeing, hiking, horse riding and cycling.



## The Rainbow Bridge

### The Rainbow Bridge

Time is:

Too Slow for those who wait,  
Too swift for those who fear,  
Too long for those who grieve,  
Too short for those who rejoice,  
But for those who love,  
Time is not

There is a bridge connecting heaven and Earth.

It is called the Rainbow Bridge because of its many colours. Just this side of the Rainbow Bridge is a land of meadows, hills, valleys, all of it covered with lush green grass.

When a beloved pet dies, the pet goes to this lovely land. There is always food and water and warm spring weather. There, the old and frail animals are young again. Those who are maimed are made whole once more. They play all day with each other, content and comfortable.

There is only one thing missing. They are not with the special person who loved them on Earth. So each day they run and play until the day comes when one suddenly stops playing and looks up! Then, the nose twitches! The ears are up! The eyes are staring! You have been seen, and that one suddenly runs from the group!

You take him or her in your arms and embrace. Your face is kissed again and again and again and you look once more into the eyes of your trusting pet.

Then together, you cross the Rainbow Bridge, never again to be separated.

Author Unknown



If you have a story about your pet that you would like to share with us, then please e-mail it to [lauren@hiltonvethospital.co.za](mailto:lauren@hiltonvethospital.co.za)